



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

February 14, 2005

News Release

SCHUYLER SEX OFFENDER DEPORTED TO EL SALVADOR

Man impregnated a 12-year-old victim

OMAHA, Neb.—U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention and removal officers deported a man to El Salvador Friday who had been convicted of sexually assaulting a 12-year-old girl.

The assault resulted in the girl becoming pregnant.

Eligio Hernandez-Zepeda, 40, of El Salvador, illegally entered the United States in 1990. He was arrested for the crime in Schuyler in July 1997, and was convicted in April 1998 of first-degree sexual assault. He was sentenced a term of not less than 10 years and not more than 15 years, and was also required to register as a sex offender.



“Targeting people like Hernandez-Zepeda is a top priority for us,” said ICE St. Paul Field Office Director Scott Baniecke. “Those who victimize the most vulnerable among us will be sought out, apprehended and removed.” Baniecke manages ICE Detention and Removal Operations in a five-state area that includes Nebraska.

ICE special agents encountered Hernandez-Zepeda while he was serving his sentence for the crime and placed a “detainer” on him, so that ICE was notified and took custody of him Jan. 12 upon his release from prison. In an effort to ensure public safety, ICE conducts checks of jails and prisons nationwide to locate, identify and then deport criminal aliens.

The removal of Hernandez-Zepeda is part of Operation Predator, a nationwide ICE initiative to protect children from sexual predators, including those who travel overseas for sex with minors, Internet child pornographers, criminal alien sex offenders, and child sex traffickers. Since Operation Predator was launched in July 2003, ICE agents have arrested more than 4,900 individuals, including 81 in Nebraska.

ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. Investigators staff this hotline around the clock.

Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

During fiscal year 2004, which ended Sept. 30, ICE detention and removal agents removed 3,152 criminal aliens and status violators from a five-state area that includes: Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. Of that number, 1,488 were classified as criminal aliens for having been convicted of such crimes as: drug offenses, assault and battery, armed robbery, rape, and fraud, among others. The remaining 1,664 had committed administrative immigration law violations.

NOTE: For a JPEG digital image file Hernandez-Zepeda, please contact Tim Counts at 952-853-2602 or via e-mail at Tim.Counts@dhs.gov. If you received this news release via e-mail, you may electronically copy the embedded JPEG image for print or broadcast use.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.